



Our Schools, Our Communities, Our Future



Superintendent Juneau's 2015 Legislative Agenda



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Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

Our Schools, Our Communities, Our Future

Montana has a lot to be proud of when it comes to our public education system. Our 8th graders score in the top six states in the nation in reading and math and score at the **top of the nation in science**. Montana's high school graduation rate has increased from 80.7 percent in 2009 to 84.4 percent in 2013. Montana's public schools have the flexibility to adapt to the needs of their communities, the small class sizes necessary for individualized instruction, and strong family and community engagement to support student success.

Strong partnerships between the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) have led to significant advances in increasing access to post-secondary education. Every public school student in the graduating class of 2014 was offered the **ACT at no cost to their families**, providing them with the opportunity to assess their college readiness. Hundreds of additional students tested eligible for scholarships and admission to college. In just two years, the number of high school **students taking dual enrollment courses while in high school has nearly doubled**. Public schools have also worked with higher education institutions to allow students to graduate high school with certificates in high-demand fields.

In November 2014, 138 high schools participated in College Application Week, raising awareness about postsecondary education opportunities and coaching students and families through the college application process. All public, private and tribal colleges waived or deferred application fees that week. The combined efforts resulted in **more than 3,000 applications submitted to Montana colleges and universities**.

OPI and OCHE are also working together to reduce remediation rates in math courses through EdReady, an online math readiness tool that has seen early success in helping students build up their math skills in order to test into credit-bearing college math courses.

The OPI also partnered with the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) and Governor Bullock to secure \$10 million in funding annually for up to four years to expand high-quality preschool programs in high needs communities. Additionally, the OPI and DPHHS are working together to address the mental health needs of Montana youth through school and community-based programs.



Superintendent Juneau and Commissioner of Higher Education Clayton Christian promoting dual credit opportunities.

Montana's public schools educate 92 percent of all students in the state. Investing in public schools is an investment in Montana's economy and the future of our state. Montana schools are constantly innovating to meet the needs of the 21st Century economy and to graduate students who have the necessary knowledge and skills to become successful adults. Our schools are engaging their entire communities in Graduation Matters efforts, raising the bar in English and math instruction, expanding high-quality early learning programs, increasing opportunities for students to explore college and careers, and expanding access to rigorous courses that prepare students for life after high school. We will continue to achieve great outcomes if we continue to invest in our public education system.

Graduation Matters Montana

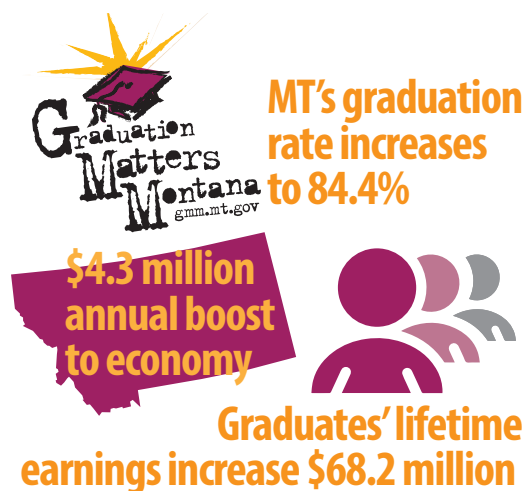
Ensuring Every Student Graduates Prepared for College and the Workforce

In today's global economy, a quality education is the key to economic prosperity. As parents, educators, business owners and taxpayers, Montanans cannot ignore the long term consequences of individuals not graduating from high school.

Since the launch of Graduation Matters Montana, the statewide dropout rate has been on the decline, and the graduation rate has gone up. **Montana's high school dropout rate has decreased from 5 percent in 2009 to 3.6 percent in 2013, and the graduation rate has increased from 80.7 percent in 2009 to 84.4 percent in 2013. This means that 772 fewer students dropped out in 2013 than 2009.** There are currently 48 communities engaged in Graduation Matters Montana initiatives, including all of our largest school districts and 11 communities on or near reservations.

According to calculations made by the Alliance for Excellent Education, Montana is likely to see significant economic gains as a result of the increase in its high school graduation rate. The Alliance estimates Montana will see a \$4.3 million annual boost to the state's economy going forward. Collectively, the additional graduates will likely earn an additional \$68.2 million over the course of their lifetimes, compared to if they had not graduated from high school.

The Montana Legislature can partner with schools and communities to support students, boost the economy, and decrease the social costs associated with students not graduating from high school.



1 **Raise the Legal Dropout Age to “age 18 or upon graduation”** **SB 14, Sen. Robyn Driscoll**

The last time this law was changed was more than 90 years ago. Currently, Montana students can legally drop out of high school at age 16. **In 2013, students who were 16 or 17 accounted for 999 of the students in Montana who dropped out or 65 percent of all dropouts.** We need to raise our expectations of our young people. In today’s global economy, a high school diploma, at minimum, is necessary for students to have a chance at being successful adults. Only 17 states in the country allow 16-year-olds to drop out of high school. *(OPI estimates an additional 190 students will stay in school for an estimated cost of \$954,000/year beginning in FY 2017)*



2 **Provide Funding for Educating 19-Year-Olds** **SB 12, Sen. Mary Sheehy Moe**

Some students need an additional year to finish their high school diploma; however, schools in Montana do not receive any state funding to educate 19-year-olds. Students who need a fifth year or extra semester to graduate are often highly motivated to graduate and need the extra time to earn core credits. In the 2012-2013 school year, 122 students who were 19 or older were enrolled in the Fall Semester and 93 were enrolled in the Spring Semester. Currently, Montana is the **only state in the nation that cuts off school funding when a student turns nineteen.** All of Montana’s neighboring states (ID, WY, ND, SD) fund students until they are 21 years of age. *(\$600,500/biennium, 75 students per year)*

Graduation Facts

On average, high school dropouts nationwide earn \$9,200 less per year than high school graduates and about one million dollars less over a lifetime than college graduates.

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, the lost lifetime earnings in Montana from dropouts this year alone total nearly \$830 million. The economy of Montana would see a combination of crime-related savings and additional revenue of about \$19.6 million each year if the male high school graduation rate increased by just five percent.

High school dropouts make up 75% of incarcerated men and women in Montana.

Workers who did not graduate from high school have an unemployment rate that is twice as high as someone who has a high school diploma. Nearly 30% of Montana’s high school dropouts meet the federal definition of low-income, which is twice the rate of high school graduates.

It is estimated that 30 million of the 46.8 million job openings in 2018 (about 64%) will require education and training beyond high school.

3 Provide AP Training for Montana Teachers

Of the graduating seniors in the class of 2013, 20.6 percent or 1,873 students took at least one AP exam during high school compared to 12.7 percent or 1,357 students in the class of 2003. In May 2013, Montana public and private high school students took a total of 3,097 AP Exams that resulted in scores of 3, 4, or 5. This represents an estimated 9,291 college credits and a **total potential cost savings for the Montana students and families of more than \$1.9 million.** While Montana has increased the number of students taking AP courses, our state ranked 36th in the nation in 2013 for the percentage of the graduating class scoring a 3 or higher on an AP exam during high school. Currently, Montana teachers must travel to Spokane, WA for the closest AP workshops and summer institutes. The OPI is requesting state funding to bring AP training back to Montana to grow the number of AP certified teachers and expand access to rigorous courses for high school students. (\$126,900 for 2017 biennium)

4 Funding for the Montana Digital Academy to Meet Demand

The MTDA is providing classes to **3,100 students enrolled in 7,300 courses annually.** In Montana's rural schools, the MTDA is providing students with access to elective courses that have never before been available, including world languages and AP courses. In our urban schools, the credit recovery classes are allowing students who lack the necessary credits to graduate catch up with their peers, increasing graduation rates in our largest school districts. With the increasing demand for these courses from Montana students, it is projected the MTDA will grow to 8,600 course enrollments annually by 2017. (\$732,500 annually, a freeze of the 2015 biennial funding or a \$1.47M increase from base of \$2.36M)



5 Bully-Free Montana

Montana is the only state in the country without anti-bullying legislation. In 2013, 38 percent of middle school students reported being bullied at school, and nearly 19 percent reported being bullied online. Twenty-six percent of high school students reported being bullied at school, and 18 percent reported being bullied online (2013 YRBS Survey). Every child deserves to feel secure, valued and surrounded by adults they trust at school. Bullying, harassment and intimidation are real issues affecting Montana students. Cell phones and computers have created an entirely new avenue for targeting victims. These problems are no longer confined to school playgrounds or events and often create a negative school environment, disrupting not only the students' ability to learn, but the operation of the school.

6 Schools of Promise

Rep. Carolyn Pease-Lopez

Superintendent Denise Juneau is committed to delivering on Montana's constitutional promise that every child, no matter their zip code or their family background, receives a quality public education. This proposal seeks to provide intensive supports to school districts that have the lowest rates of student achievement across the state, **building on the successes and lessons learned from OPI's work with four school systems over the past five years through the Montana Schools of Promise initiative.** These are schools that



face significant challenges related to poverty, trauma and rurality. OPI proposes to work with four school districts to augment their school improvement efforts with additional staff supports – a school

Supporting Safe and Healthy Students

A positive learning environment where students are healthy and feel safe and connected to their school is a key component to ensuring our students succeed. The OPI is committed to supporting the safety and health of Montana students so they may reach their full potential. The OPI is engaged in the following efforts to support the mental and emotional health of Montana students:

- **Wraparound services:** Through a four-year \$1.8M SAMHSA grant, the OPI is delivering direct mental health services to students in Frazer, Lake Deer, Wyola and Pryor.
- **Suicide prevention protocols:** OPI is working in three regions (Bitterroot, Fort Peck reservation, and Bakken-impacted communities) to develop school-community protocols to respond to youth mental health crises in rural Montana.
- **Youth Mental Health First Aid:** OPI received a \$1.9M renewable grant to address youth mental health needs in Kalispell, Browning and Butte. Up to 650 school and community members in each community will be trained to recognize and respond to youth mental health crises.
- **Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI):** MBI is a proactive approach to creating behavioral supports and a social culture that establishes social, emotional, and academic success for all students. The goal of MBI is to improve school climate and safety, decrease bullying, reduce discipline referrals, increase instructional time, and improve academic achievement. The OPI received a \$750k renewable grant to expand the program to additional schools and improve implementation in existing schools. The OPI expects to serve 59,000 students over the course of the grant.

board coach, a mental health wraparound facilitator and a graduation coach. These three positions will help to stabilize the administrative infrastructure through work with the board of trustees and superintendent (school board coach); provide direct student mental health well-being services to foster strengths and resiliency in children with complex needs (wraparound facilitator); and engage students in setting and meeting academic goals (graduation coach). (\$1,332,240 for 2017 biennium)

Ensuring Montana Schools have the Resources They Need to Stay at the Top of the Nation

Montana's public schools are one of our state's greatest assets. We have high-quality teachers, bright students and strong community support for our schools. The 21st Century economy is demanding more from our schools and our students, and Montana's investments in public education are paying off. We will continue to improve student achievement and ensure our students are prepared for college and the workforce if we continue to support a quality public education for every Montana student.

1 Supporting K-12 Statutory Budget Increases HB 27, Rep. Denise Hayman

The OPI seeks inflationary increases to the basic and per-ANB entitlements, the quality educator payment, the Indian Education for All Payment, and the American Indian Achievement Gap payment by 2.33% in 2016 and 1.79% in 2017. The increases are included in Governor Bullock's proposed budget. These inflationary adjustments will help schools address cost increases in their general operating budgets including staff compensation, health insurance premiums, utilities, and instructional materials. The funding will allow schools to recruit and retain qualified staff and to provide instructional supports for students to reach high academic expectations. Superintendent Juneau supports the increases included in the Governor's budget and opposes any efforts to cut current funding for K-12 education. (*The OPI requests \$41.3M for statutory increases in the K-12 BASE aid in the 2017 biennium.*)

2 Supporting a Statutory Increase for Special Education

In the 2013-2014 school year, 16,473 students (11.4%) were provided special education services. Special education programming in Montana is funded 26% federally, 33% state, and 41% at the local level. Special Education funding is currently the only public education funding stream without an inflationary adjustment required in statute. In order to continue to provide quality services to students with disabilities, the OPI asks for a statutory increase in special education funding of 2.33% in 2016 and 1.79% in 2017. (\$2.78M for the 2017 biennium)



The Office of the Superintendent welcomes your questions. Please contact Chief of Staff Madalyn Quinlan at mquinlan@mt.gov or Communications Director Allyson Hagen at ahagen2@mt.gov.